

QA-548
John Coursey Store
Chester, Queen Anne's County

Constructed ca. 1928
Privately owned

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The John Coursey Store is a 1-story wood-frame building that stands immediately north of Main Street in the Chester community of Kent Island, Queen Anne's County. Constructed ca. 1928, the store features a front-gable roof that projects to form a canopy and a large main room with a central chimney. The store is deteriorated.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1928, John Coursey acquired a small parcel of land on the north side of Main Street in Chester from the Gardner family. He constructed a small general store that he operated until 1945, when he sold the property to Myrtle Seymour. Seymour continued to operate the store at least through the 1950s. At what date the store closed is unknown. Seymour's daughter inherited the property in 1974. A catering company currently uses the building for storage.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. QA-548

1. Name of Property

(indicate preferred name)

historic John Coursey Store (preferred)

other Myrtle's Store

2. Location

street and number 2021 Main Street not for publication

city, town Chester vicinity

county Queen Anne's

3. Owner of Property

(give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Samuel Bullen and William Comegys, Jr.

street and number P.O. Box 116 telephone (410) 643-6436 (Comegys)

city, town Chester state MD zip code 21619

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Queen Anne's County Circuit Court liber MWM 331 folio 243

city, town Centreville tax map 57 tax parcel 174 tax ID number 04-052501

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
☐ Other:

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	1
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> defense	0
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	0
		<input type="checkbox"/> education	0
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	0
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	1
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	0
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	0
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	0
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	0
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	0
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	0
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	0
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	0
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	0
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: storage	0
			Total
			0

Number of Contributing Resources
previously listed in the Inventory

0

7. Description

Inventory No. QA-548

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

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ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The John Coursey Store is located on the north side of Main Street in the Chester community of Kent Island, Queen Anne's County. The store faces south and stands approximately 10 feet from the edge of the road. A small gravel and grass yard surrounds the store.

The John Coursey Store is a 1-story, front-gable, wood-frame commercial building. It has vertical board siding, a central brick chimney, and an asphalt shingle roof with bargeboards and false rafter tails. The front-gable roof projects to form a canopy that is supported by two square wood posts. The underside of the canopy is open to the rafters. The front (south) elevation of the store has a recent garage door, a pedestrian entry with a recent metal storm door, and paired and single 1/1 wood windows with plain surrounds. There are also 1/1 wood windows at the south ends of the east and west elevations. Other smaller window openings have been boarded over. A rear entry on the north elevation has been boarded over.

The interior of the John Coursey Store consists of a large front room and a small back room. The front room has a central brick chimney but no stove. The south half of the room has a concrete floor, vertical board walls, and a board ceiling. The north half has a board floor and a recent, paneled ceiling. No store fixtures remain. The back room is unfinished and has a small, frame loft.

The John Coursey Store is deteriorated. The wood siding is weathered, and the roof sags badly between trusses. On the interior, the wood floors are rotten. The building's form still indicates its commercial type, however the addition of the garage opening and the removal of the interior fixtures compromise its integrity.

8. Significance

Inventory No. QA-548

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/	<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____	

Specific dates ca. 1928 (construction), 1945 (sale to Myrtle Seymour) **Architect/Builder** unknown

Construction dates ca. 1928

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The John Coursey Store was constructed ca. 1928 on Main Street in Chester. It was part of a network of small general stores that served Kent Islanders prior to construction of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and the development of shopping centers in the 1950s.

RESOURCE HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

In 1928, John Coursey acquired a small parcel of land on the north side of Main Street in Chester from the Gardner family. He constructed a small general store that he operated until 1945, when he sold the property to Myrtle Seymour. Seymour continued to operate the store at least through the 1950s. At what date the store closed is unknown. Seymour's daughter inherited the property in 1974. A catering company currently uses the building for storage.

In *The Land that Once Was Eden*, Janet Freedman recalls visiting the store:

The store is housed in a long, low building, its weathered siding decorated with worn metal signs advertising seed corn and Royal Crown Cola. Tall gasoline pumps sit at the edge of the small parking area of sand and oyster shell sprawling in the hot white light of the summer sun. A deep overhang stretches across the front of the building, shading the windows and entrance from the heat, and the worn and battered screened door opens into a cool dark interior that smells of hay and seeds and luncheon meat. Myrtle bought the store from Mr. Coursey (who was also the local barber), and his barber chair sits unused at the back of the store.¹

The John Coursey Store was part of a network of small general stores that served Kent Islanders. The stores were clustered in villages and scattered along rural roads. In addition to general merchandise, many stores had specialties such as yard goods (Molly Benton's Store), paint and wallpaper (Price & Son), or building supplies (Kirwan's Store).² Construction of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge in 1952 opened Kent Island to development, and the general stores faced stiff competition from modern shopping centers such as the Kent Island Shopping Center (1953). The general stores gradually closed.

¹ Freedman, Janet. *Kent Island: The Land that Once Was Eden*. 76-77.

² Ibid., 82-83.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. QA-548

Freedman, Janet. *The Land that Once Was Eden*. Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2002.

Queen Anne's County Land Records: liber MWM 331, folio 243; liber CWS 82, folio 677; liber ASG 12, folio 306; liber BHT 12, folio 98.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property approximately 0.25 acres
Acreage of historical setting 0.55 acres
Quadrangle name Kent Island

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The John Coursey Store is located on part of Parcel 174 on Queen Anne's County Tax Map 57. The Store is bounded on the west by the adjacent property, on the south by Main Street, on the east by a gravel drive leading to the rear of Parcel 174, and on the north by the dwelling that stands on the rear of Parcel 174. The boundary includes only the store and land immediately surrounding it.

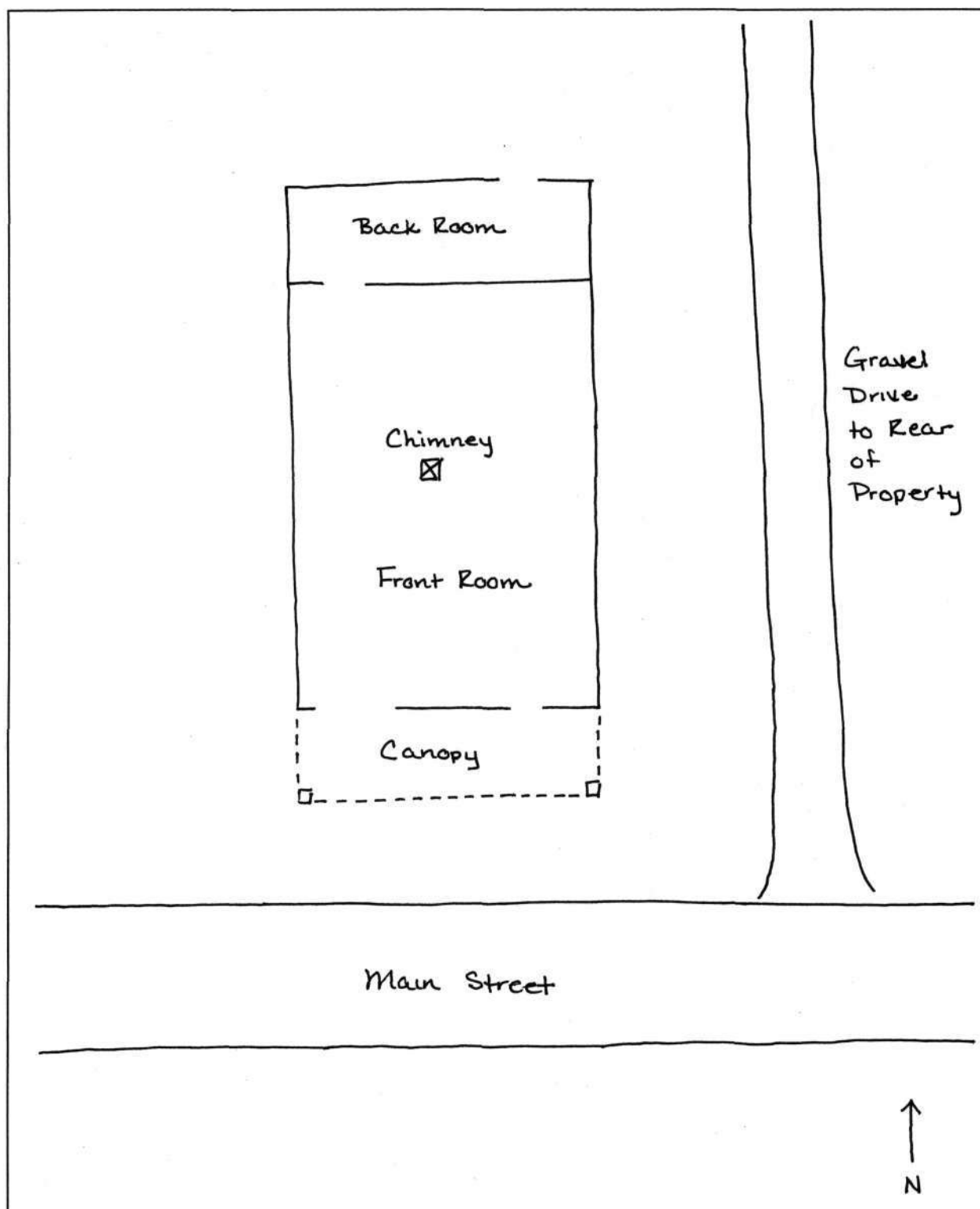
11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Julie Darsie		
organization	Betty Bird & Associates LLC	date	June 2005
street & number	2607 24 th St., NW, Suite 3	telephone	(202) 588-9033
city or town	Washington, D.C.	state	N/A

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600



Site and Floor Plan

QA-548

John Coursey Store

Chester, Queen Anne's County, Maryland



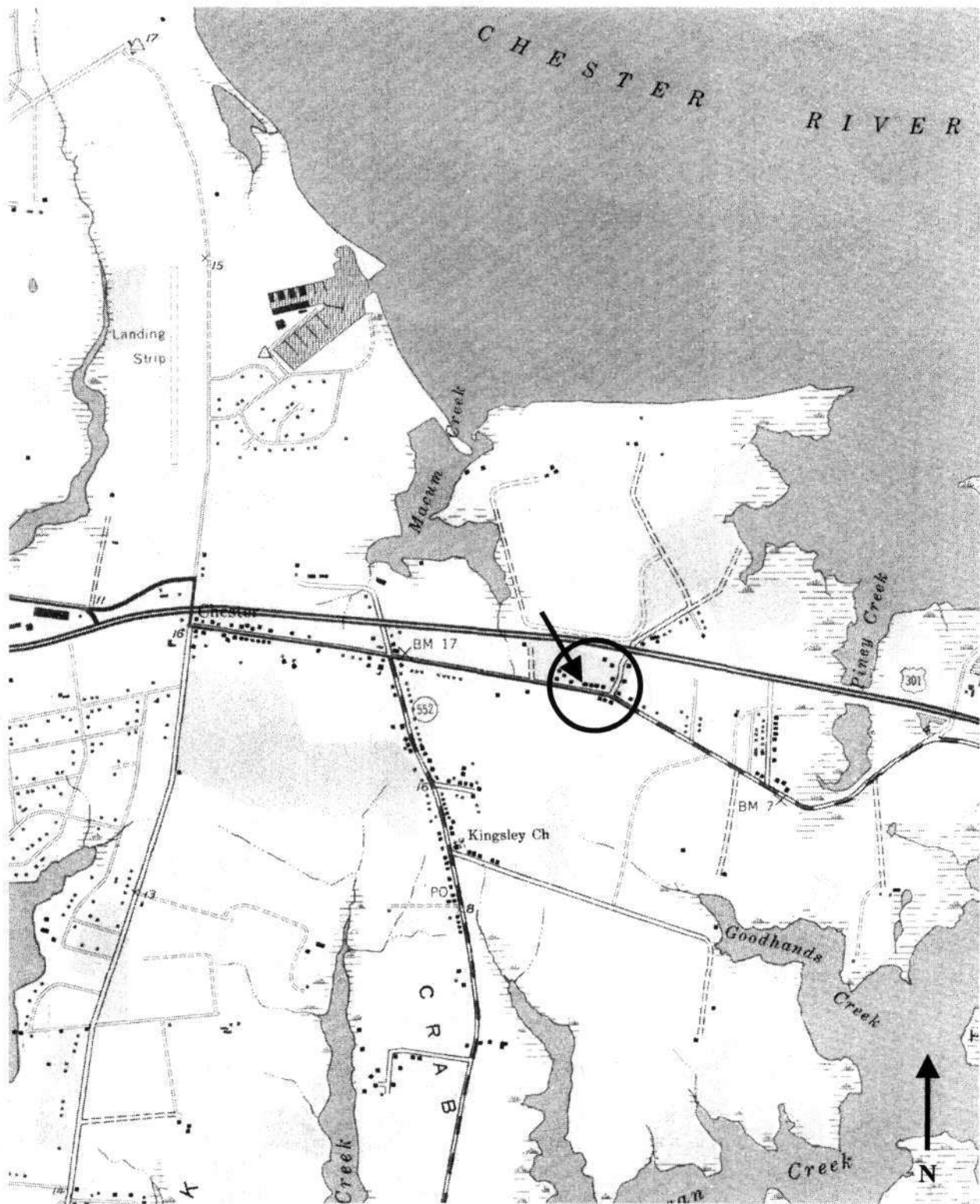
Mid-1940s Photograph of Store

QA-548

John Coursey Store

Chester, Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Source: Janet Freedman, *The Land that Once Was Eden*



QA-548
John Coursey Store
Chester, Queen Anne's County, Maryland
Kent Island, Maryland Quadrangle (1:24,000)



QA-542

John Coursey Store

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

May 2005

NO SHRO

View from SW showing south (front) and west
elevations

1 of 5



QA-548

John Coursey Store

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

May 2005

MD SHPO

View from SW showing west elevation

2 of 5

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GA-542

John Coursey Store

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darnie for Betty Bud & Associates

May 2005

MD SHPO

View from NW showing north (rear) and part
of west elevation.

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QA-548

John Coursey Store

Queen Annes County, Maryland

Julia Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

May 2005

MD SHPO

View from NE showing north (rear) and part of east
elevation

4 of 5

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QA-548

John Coursey Star

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

Julie Darsie for Betty Bird & Associates

May 2005

MD SHPO

View from SE showing south (front) elevation

5 of 5

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